**Kent Supported Homes Promoting Positive
Behaviour and
Safer Care**

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# Overview

This promoting positive behaviour policy is derived from Kent County Councils Fostering Service and Regulation 22 from the guidance on Supported accommodation registration requirements in order to ensure a continuity of standards and practices across our service and KCC children’s services. The same principles promoted and used within our Fostering Service should also apply to those working and living within Kent Supported Homes.

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# 1. Introduction and Legal Framework

Being able to promote positive behaviour and manage young people’s behaviour well is central to the quality of support provided in any Kent Supported Homes. Negative behaviour should usually be managed through building positive relationships with the young person. Hosts need to be able to respond positively to each young person’s individual behaviour and to be skilled at both defusing difficult situations and avoiding situations escalating.

The Promoting Positive Behaviour and Safer Care policy is derived from Kent County Council Fostering Service policy as the fundamental principles set out in this document equally apply to Kent Supported Homes and have been further developed in accordance with Regulation 22 of The Guide to the Supported Accommodation Regulations including Quality Standards March 2023 as part of the Ofsted requirements for all supported accommodation services for 16-17 year olds to be registered*.*

*The registered person must prepare and implement a behaviour management policy which sets out how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the service. The behaviour management policy must also set out measures that should be taken following any exceptional use of restraint which may only be used in relation to young people in the service where it is deemed an appropriate and proportionate response to preventing injury on the very rare and unforeseen occasions where the young person presents an immediate danger to themselves or those around them, or to prevent serious damage to property. The behaviour management policy needs to outline the service’s approach to supporting young people to maintain a reasonable standard of behaviour that reduces the risk or impact on the welfare and protection of themselves and others.*

In line with these Regulations, Kent Supported Homes service are clear that restraint of a young person in care should not be used within this service in any circumstance, because most of the Hosts are single carers working within their own homes. That Hosts have limited ability to impose sanctions for poor behaviour must be clear, although it is understood that any sanctions should be reasonable and fair and must not include restraint or corporal punishment. Sanctions should generally not be required due to the level of independence of the young people entering this service.

In accordance with the Regulation 22 standards this policy also makes clear that:

* Hosts have high expectations of all young people in their household.
* Hosts provide an environment and culture that promotes, models and supports positive behaviour.
* Young people can develop and practice skills to build and maintain positive relationships, be assertive and to resolve conflicts positively.
* Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour in a way that is appropriate to their age and abilities.
* Hosts should encourage open dialogue so they can discuss risks and concerns with the young person and support them to keep themselves safe.
* Hosts respect the young person’s privacy and confidentiality, in a manner that is consistent with good parenting.
* Hosts have positive strategies for effectively supporting young people where they encounter discrimination or bullying wherever this occurs, or if they have concerns around a young person’s safety and/or risk of harm or exploitation, they should follow Kent County Council’s safeguarding procedures.
* Hosts receive support on how to manage their responses and feelings arising from supporting young people, particularly where young people display very challenging behaviour, and understand how young people’s previous experiences can manifest in challenging behaviour.
* All Hosts receive training in safe care of young people, including training in de-escalating problems and disputes.
* Each Host is aware of all the necessary information available to the Kent Supported Homes service about a young person’s circumstances, including any significant recent events, to help the Host understand and predict the young person’s needs and behaviours and support the young person within their household.
* The Kent Supported Homes services approach to support minimises the need for police involvement to deal with challenging behaviour and avoids criminalising young people unnecessarily. However, if circumstances on the rare occasion develop that escalate to the point that the safety of individuals and/or property becomes a matter of grave concern then Hosts are instructed to seek immediate support from the police.
* Hosts should not restrict the movement of a young person to keep them inside a setting.

# 2. Encouraging and Rewarding the Young person

Whilst a young person brings their own values and behaviours into Kent Supported Homes, Hosts play a key role in influencing their behaviour. The culture of the home is crucial, and Hosts are expected to understand, manage and deal with young people's behaviour, including encouraging the young person to take responsibility for their behaviour and help them to learn how to resolve conflict.

All young people in care or those “eligible” (care leavers, 16-17 years as defined by Leaving Care Act 2000) should have clear, fair boundaries, where they feel safe, encouraged and appropriately rewarded, so that they will thrive and do well. If Hosts adopt this approach placement stability is far more likely to be achieved.

Hosts should always endeavour to:

* Listen to and empathise with young person, respect their thoughts and feelings and take their wishes into consideration.
* Look for things that are going well, or any step in the right direction, and appropriately encourage it.
* Use rewards in a creative and diverse way, specific to young people’s needs, capabilities and interests. This may mean that young people are encouraged with positive feedback that re-enforces the positive behaviour. Sometimes rewards can be used, such as a cinema trip or a meal out. As hosts are not foster carers and don’t receive maintenance allowance the use of such rewards should be discussed with the young person's social worker and agreement sought prior to the activity being used to reinforce the positive behaviour.
* A young person who has few social or life skills and whose self-esteem and confidence is low may require forms of encouragement and reward which are intensive or frequent in order to help/remind them that they are doing well and appreciated.
* A young person who has previously been unable to get up for school/college or whatever education, training or employment opportunity they should be engaging in could be offered an incentive, or incentivising activity for getting up on time for a few days. Again, this should be discussed with the social worker and form part of the young person’s agreed Pathway Plan (care plan).
* However, it should also be borne in mind that some young people cannot tolerate praise as it undermines the low perception, they may have of themselves. For these young people smaller more specific praise is needed.

Over time, as a young person achieves what is expected, such rewards should be reduced, or the young person should be expected to achieve more for the same or a similar reward.

# 3. Minimum House Rules

All Hosts will have a ‘move in agreement’ outlining the overarching rules and boundaries of the home. This should be explained to the young person, with the reasons for the rules and they should also know that there are rules for everyone. They should not feel that they are being treated with less regard than other members of the household. Ideally these expectations should be known to young person before they come to live with the Hosts. Some examples are:

* No smoking.
* No illicit drugs to be consumed on the property.
* No unagreed guests.
* Keep own bedroom clean and tidy.
* Do not go into any other bedroom/private space.
* Be dressed all the time whilst in a communal space.
* If you have gone out, return home at the time you have said.
* Always be where you say you will be.
* If you want to change your plans when you are out, let your Host know.
* Do not hurt or act aggressively towards any member of your Host’s family.
* Do not hurt or act aggressively towards any pet of your Host family.
* Homework must be done.
* If excluded from school, schoolwork will be done at home taking into consideration individual needs.
* When using the bathroom or toilet always close the door.
* If you have any problems, let your Host know.
* Try to consider other people's feelings.

# 4. Sanctions

## 4.1 Guidance on Use of Sanctions

Many young people in care have come to view themselves, and can be viewed by others, as not good enough. They have had their fill of sanctions, often felt to have been imposed inconsistently, unfairly or as acts of revenge. Before imposing sanctions, Hosts should do all they can to support and encourage a young person to do well. If the young person does not behave acceptably, strategies should be adopted that are encouraging and rewarding. Sanctions for young people aged 16 and 17 should be shared and where possible, agreed in advance by the social worker for said young person.

Rather than noticing and sanctioning misbehaviour it is always better to notice and reward good behaviour, or any step in the right direction. For example, it may be more effective to allow a young person to have use of a video or TV at bedtime for getting up on time, rather than taking the TV away for getting up late. The former is discouraging and can lead to resentment; the latter is encouraging and can improve self-esteem and relationships between young person and the Host family.

## 4.2 Be creative and think outside the box!

If a young person continues to behave in unacceptable ways, they should be reminded about what is expected and given further encouragement to get it right. If misbehaviour persists or is serious, effective use of reprimands can act as a disincentive or firm reminder. If this does not work, or may not, sanctions may be effective.

Where sanctions are used, they must be reasonable and the minimum necessary to achieve the objective. Also, there should be a belief that the sanction will have the desired outcome; increasing the possibility that acceptable behaviour will follow.

If sanctions are imposed, the following principles should be applied:

* Sanctions must be the exception, not the rule. A last resort.
* Sanctions must not be imposed as acts of revenge or retaliation.
* Think before imposing the sanctions; don't apply it in the heat of the moment.
* Sanctions may only be imposed upon young people for persistent or serious misbehaviour where reminders and reprimands have already failed or are likely to fail.
* Sanctions should only be used if there is a reasonable chance they will have the desired effect of making the point and in reducing or preventing further unacceptable behaviour.
* Before applying any sanction, make sure the young person is aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and, if possible, warn them that sanctions will be applied if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
* It is the certainty not the severity of sanctions that is important.
* Sanctions should only last as long as they need to and allow the young person the opportunity to make a fresh start as quickly as possible. Where possible, the duration of the sanction should be shared with the young person, along with any actions which can be taken by the young person to end them sooner, such as by changing their behaviour in a clear and achievable way.

## 4.3 Non-Approved Sanctions

The following sanctions are non-approved, which means they may never be imposed upon young person:

* Any form of corporal punishment, i.e. any intentional application of force as punishment, including slapping, punching, rough handling and throwing objects.
* Any sanction relating to the consumption or deprivation of food or drink.
* Any restriction on a young person’s spending time with his or her parents, relatives or friends; visits to the young person by his or her parents, relatives or friends; a young persons’ communications with any of the persons listed below\*; or his or her access to any telephone helpline providing counselling or advice for the young person. (N.B. This does not prevent contact or communication being restricted in exceptional circumstances, where it is necessary to do so to protect the young person or others).
* Any requirement that a young person wear distinctive or inappropriate clothes.
* The use or withholding of medication or medical or dental treatment.
* The intentional deprivation of sleep.
* The modification of a young person's behaviour through bribery or the use of threats.
* Any sanction used intentionally or unintentionally which may humiliate a young person or could cause them to be ridiculed.
* The imposition of any fine or financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum by way of reparation. (N.B**.** The Court may impose fines upon a young person which Hosts should encourage and support them to repay).
* Any intimate physical examination of a young person.
* The withholding of aids/equipment needed by a disabled young person.
* Any measure which involves a young person making unwelcome demands of another, or the sanction of a group of young persons for the behaviour of an individual young person.
* Swearing at or the use of foul, demeaning or humiliating language or measures.

\* The persons with whom the young person may have contact, in relation to the above, are:

* Any officer of the [Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/cafcass.html) (Cafcass) appointed for the young person.
* Any social worker for the time being assigned to the young person by his or her placing authority.
* Any person appointed in respect of any requirement of the procedure specified in the Representations Procedure (Children) Regulations 1991.
* An [Independent Visitor](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/independent_visitor.html).
* Any person authorised by the Regulatory Authority e.g. Ofsted.
* Any person authorised by the local authority in whose area the Kent Supported Home is situated.
* Any person authorised by the Secretary of State to conduct an inspection of the Kent Supported Home and the young person there.

## 4.4 Approved sanctions

The following sanctions may be imposed upon a young person:

* Reparation, involving the young person doing something to put right the wrong they have done, e.g. repairing damage or returning stolen property. This will need to be negotiated with the involvement of the young person’s social worker and accommodation officer.
* Restitution, involving the young person paying for all or part of damage caused or the replacement of misappropriated monies or goods. This again needs to be negotiated with the young person’s social worker and must be affordable and proportionate. Larger amounts may be paid in restitution but must be of a fixed amount with a clear start and end period. Any decisions in relation to withdrawing money or payments for damage or loss should be discussed with the young person's social worker and accommodation officer.
* Additional chores, involving a young person undertaking additional chores over and above those they would normally be expected to do.
* Removal of equipment, for example the use of a TV, PlayStation or similar gaming device (only if ‘lent’ to the young persons by the Host).

## 4.5 Recording of sanctions

If a young person receives a sanction, it should be recorded by the Host on their monthly report for the young person.

# 5. Searching

Body searches, searches of clothing worn by a young person or of their bedrooms is not permitted by Hosts.

Should a KSH Host suspect that a young person is carrying or has concealed an item which may place the young person or another person at risk, they should try to obtain the item by co-operation/negotiation.

If a KSH Host suspects that a young person is concealing an item which may place themselves or another person at risk, they must notify the young person’s social worker or accommodation officer, and in an emergency, also the police.

# 6. Serious Incidents Requiring the Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

## 6.1 Types of Restrictive Physical Intervention

Physical intervention means stopping a young person from doing something that they appear to want to do by using physical means. The Kent Supported Homes Service does not encourage Hosts to physically intervene to manage young person or young people’s behaviour. Restrictive physical intervention should not be used by Hosts with the exception of the use of physical presence as defined below.

**Presence**: A form of control using no contact, such as standing in front of a young person or obstructing a doorway to negotiate with a young person; but allowing the young person the freedom to leave if they wish.

## 6.2 KSH Host Training

All Hosts receive training prior to approval to enable them to understand the feelings and behaviours of a young person in care that they are providing support to. Various training is also available post approval in positive behaviour management and includes e-learning and face to face courses.

## 6.3 Kent Supported Homes Host and Service Responsibilities

Given the nature of Kent Supported Homes service we advise that the use of restrictive physical intervention is not permitted and that where a serious situation develops the police should be called in the first instance. If the serious incident occurs out of hours, then the local authority Out of Hours service should be contacted between 5pm – 8.30am.

Incidents that require the intervention of the police because the behaviours have escalated to such a degree that there are serious concerns for people's safety can be upsetting for all concerned. Following any medical or first aid that might need to be provided, the young person and Hosts should be given separate opportunities to talk and reflect on the incident and any future action to prevent the need to intervene or make the situation safer. If others within the KSH Host’s household/networks have witnessed or been involved in any way they should also be given the opportunity to be debriefed about the incident to help inform learning for the future. Whereas all Hosts should endeavour to deal with as many of the challenges that are involved in supporting the young person and young people without involving the police, if the police are involved, the accommodation officer and young person's social worker must be notified immediately. The matter will then be reported to the relevant team manager and a notification to Ofsted should be made under part 6 of The Supported Accommodation Regulations 2023.